



MEDIA FAIRNESS INITIATIVE:

A WEEKLY LOOK AT BIAS IN THE NEWS

Friday, October 5, 2007



Networks Fail to Report on Guns Used for Self-Defense

Second Amendment supporters frequently point out that the right to bear arms is important in protecting one's family and home. According to a recent survey by the Culture and Media Institute (CMI), the mainstream media has largely ignored this side of the argument.

CMI surveyed network newscasts from January 1-August 1, 2007 and compared the number of stories about gun-related homicides to the number of stories about guns being used for self-defense. The CMI survey found that ABC, CBS, and NBC featured a total of **650 murder stories and just 2 self-defense stories**. The CMI study also cited a survey by the United States Journal of Criminal Law, which showed that more than **2.5 million people use a gun in self defense each year**.

TV Newscasts Portray Businessmen in Negative Way

Most economists agree that business stimulates the economy by encouraging entrepreneurship and creating jobs. However, according to a recent survey by the Business and Media Institute, **television newscasts have consistently portrayed businessmen in a negative way**. BMI studied evening newscasts on ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN and Fox News for a full year. Key findings:

- About 57 percent (481 out of 848) of the portrayals of businessmen were negative.
- Small businesses employ about half of America's private-sector workers. However, big businesses were far more likely to make it into the news, with about 78 percent of the businessmen mentioned coming from big businesses.
- Businessmen showed up as criminals 1½ times more often than they did as philanthropists.
- ABC was the most balanced of the network evening news shows, with exactly half of its portrayals positive and half negative.
- CBS had more than a 2-to-1 ratio of criminals to philanthropists. In contrast, both other networks did more charity portrayals than criminal ones.
- Fox was more balanced than CNN, with about 44 percent positive and 56 percent negative portrayals of businessmen.
- CNN had 76 percent negative portrayals of businessmen and a 7-to-1 criminal-to-philanthropist ratio.

Match the Quote with the TV News Anchor

The quotes below were recently attributed to A) MSNBC's Chris Matthews; B) MSNBC's Keith Olbermann (from a magazine interview); C) NBC's Meredith Vieira. Can you match the quote with the anchor? (Answers below)

1. "Senator, good morning to you. Let me ask you right out of the bat — when the President speaks about Iraq tonight, do you believe that he will have any credibility?"
2. "There's so much of this that's truly, and I don't mean this in a cartoon sense, fantastic. When you're with the President, does he live in this world? Or does he just sell it?"
3. "Al Qaeda really hurt us, but not as much as Rupert Murdoch has hurt us, particularly in the case of Fox News. Fox News is worse than Al Qaeda — worse for our society. It's as dangerous as the Ku Klux Klan ever was."

Answer: 1)C; 2)A; 3)B